



Rural COOP fosters innovative and green participatory approaches to improve integrated territorial development policy instruments of rural areas.

Newsletter #3

In this newsletter:

- Good Practices Catalogue;
- Semester 3 Good Practices;
- Stakeholder engagement.



From Good Practices to Local Perspectives

Rural COOP continues to strengthen interregional learning by connecting **inspiring practices which were identified by project partners at local, regional and national level with the knowledge and experience of local and regional stakeholders.**

This edition highlights the **Rural COOP Good Practices Catalogue**, a shared resource bringing together practical approaches to integrated territorial development in rural and mountain areas. The catalogue supports partners in looking beyond individual examples to consider what can be learned, adapted and transferred to different territorial contexts.

Three good practices presented during Semester 3 further enrich this exchange, exploring approaches to **energy and resource savings, integrated mountain development, and sustainable forest management.** All three good practices were approved by Interreg Europe policy experts.

At the same time, stakeholder engagement remains central to the Rural COOP learning process. Through interviews with experts, practitioners and regional actors from across the partner territories, the project captures first-hand perspectives on **local challenges, cooperation, sustainability and community-led development.**

Together, these practices and stakeholder voices provide complementary perspectives: **tested solutions from different territories and the local knowledge needed to understand how they can inspire future policy improvement.**



Explore the Rural COOP Good Practices Catalogue



The **Rural COOP Good Practices Catalogue** brings together inspiring participatory and foresight-based approaches to integrated territorial development from project partners. It showcases practical solutions for strengthening rural and mountain communities, encouraging stakeholder involvement, sustainable resource management and innovative local development. Designed as a resource for learning, exchange and adaptation, the catalogue helps regions identify ideas that can inspire improvements in their own territorial policies.



Semester 3 Good Practices

50/50 energy and resource savings model at Ii Municipality



CITIZENS

Integrated non-urban development



The **50/50 Energy & Resource Savings Model** at Ii Municipality in Finland engages schools and kindergartens directly in reducing electricity, heating and water consumption. By returning 50% of the financial savings achieved through energy-efficiency measures to the participating units, the model creates a tangible incentive for students and staff to take action, while strengthening environmental awareness and embedding sustainable behaviour in everyday community life.



Green Community of Valsugana and Tesino, Province of Trento, Italy



CITIZENS Integrated non-urban development



The **Green Community of Valsugana and Tesino** in Italy promotes an integrated approach to sustainable mountain development, combining environmental protection with the responsible use of local resources. By linking sustainable tourism, green mobility, energy transition and the valorisation of natural and cultural assets, it supports stronger connections between neighbouring areas, increases territorial attractiveness and improves access to services in mountain communities.

Sustainable Forest Management and Trading of Sustainability Credits - Tuscan-Emilian Apennine area



CITIZENS Integrated non-urban development



The **Sustainable Forest Management and Sustainability Credits** in the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines combines certified forest management with a market-based mechanism that rewards additional environmental benefits. By generating tradable sustainability credits linked to increased CO₂ absorption and improved ecosystem services, the model creates new incentives for forest owners while helping businesses support climate action, biodiversity and the long-term resilience of mountain forests.



Stakeholder interviews bring local experience and practical knowledge into the Rural COOP learning process. Through conversations with experts, practitioners and regional actors, the project explores territorial challenges, successful approaches and the conditions that support sustainable rural development. These voices help connect policy learning with real-life experience and provide valuable insights into how cooperation, innovation and community participation can strengthen rural and mountain areas across Europe.

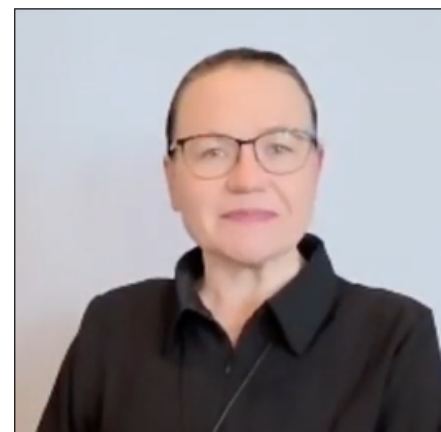
Michele Guerra, ERS-BV, Regional Development Agency of Bellinzona and Valleys, Switzerland



Michele Guerra shares the experience of Masterplan Leventina, a long-term territorial development process built around local priorities and close cooperation between municipalities, businesses, communities and regional institutions. His perspective shows how bottom-up planning can translate a shared territorial vision into strategic projects and investment priorities.

Sanna Tyni, Oulu University of Applied Sciences, Finland

Sanna Tyni shares insights on low-carbon development, circular economy and the role of applied research in supporting regional sustainability transitions. Her perspective highlights the importance of collaboration between research organisations, businesses and public authorities in turning climate and circular-economy ambitions into practical solutions for rural and regional development.





Alessandro Gretter, Edmund Mach Foundation. Italy



Alessandro Gretter reflects on the challenges facing rural and mountain territories and the importance of participatory, multi-level approaches to sustainable local development. Drawing on extensive experience in natural resource governance and climate adaptation, he highlights the value of connecting research, institutions and local communities to build more resilient territories.

Giancarlo Orsingher, Brenta River Network of Reserves, Italy

Giancarlo Orsingher shares the experience of the Brenta River Network of Reserves, where municipalities, institutions and local actors cooperate to protect biodiversity while strengthening people's connection with their territory. His perspective demonstrates how environmental conservation, awareness and community involvement can reinforce one another.



Olya Genova, Vrachanski Balkan Nature Park Directorate, Bulgaria



Olya Genova explores how nature conservation, environmental education and sustainable tourism can contribute to the development of rural and mountain areas. Her experience underlines the importance of engaging local communities and creating partnerships that turn natural heritage into an asset for both residents and visitors.



Maja Larsson, Katrineholm Municipality, Sweden



Maja Larsson presents Katrineholm's work on circular economy and reuse, showing how environmental and social objectives can be addressed together. The municipality's new reuse centre combines waste reduction and resource efficiency with citizen engagement, learning and opportunities for employment and social inclusion.

Heidi Pasanen, University of Oulu, Finland

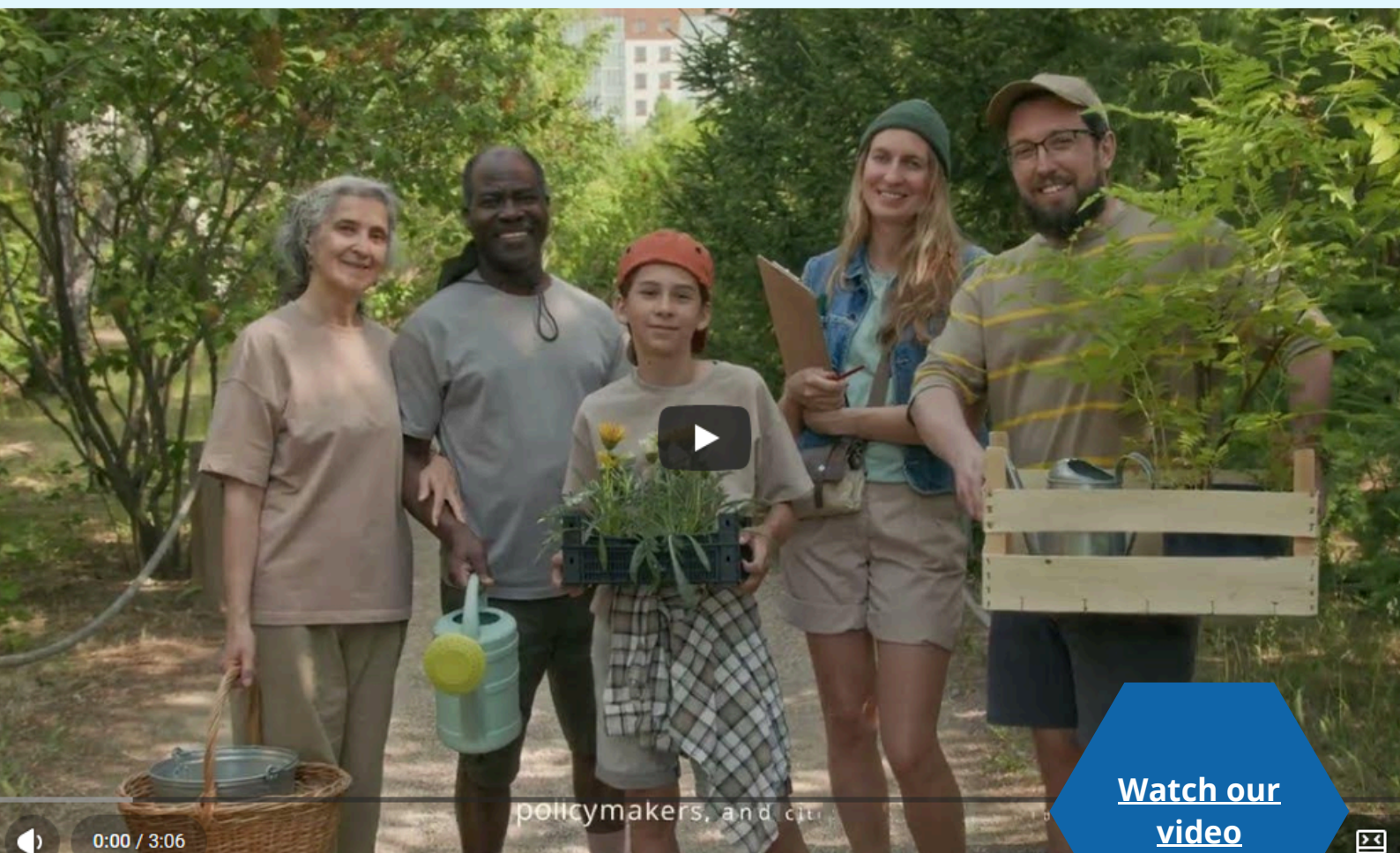
Heidi Pasanen shares lessons from the BIOTUTO Project, where farmers, researchers, businesses, municipalities and other stakeholders work together on bioenergy and circular-economy solutions for rural areas. Her experience highlights the value of close cooperation, practical experimentation and knowledge exchange in turning sustainable ideas into solutions that respond to local needs.



Arkadiusz Tkocz, Opolskie Voivodeship, Poland



Arkadiusz Tkocz discusses the role of community participation and locally driven revitalisation in strengthening regional development. His perspective highlights the importance of building municipalities' capacity, responding to locally identified needs and creating opportunities for residents to take an active role in shaping the future of their communities.



[Watch our
video](#)

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Disclaimer: This newsletter was supported as part of the Rural COOP project, an Interreg Europe Programme project, co-funded by the European Union. This document reflects only the author's view. The Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.